

# Upcounty Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2010  
(July 2009-June 2010)



*Prepared by the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board  
in cooperation with the  
Upcounty Regional Services Center  
Montgomery County, Maryland*





## *Montgomery County Executive*

Isiah Leggett

## *Montgomery County Council*

Nancy Floreen, President

Valerie Ervin, Vice President

Phil Andrews

Roger Berliner

Marc Elrich

George Leventhal

Michael Knapp

Nancy Navarro

Duchy Trachtenberg

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*Upcounty Citizens  
Advisory Board*

## About the Board

The Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board (UCAB) provides advice to the County Executive, County Council, and Upcounty Regional Director on issues affecting the Upcounty community in addition to acting as a two-way communication link between the County and the community.

The twenty volunteer members of UCAB are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council.

**Geographic Scope** The Upcounty region is defined as being roughly north and west of Shady Grove Road and it comprises about one-half of the geographic area of Montgomery County and one-third of its population. It ranges in character from urban to rural in communities such as Barnesville, Boyds, Clarksburg, Damascus, Darnestown, Derwood, Gaithersburg, Germantown, Goshen, Laytonsville, Montgomery Village, North Potomac and Poolesville. Therefore, UCAB's members are selected for geographic balance as well as for diversity of background, community and professional experience and expertise.

**Structure** UCAB operates in public meetings and in 2009-2010 had two standing committees: the Land Use and Preservation Committee and the Quality of Life Committee. UCAB's leadership consists of the chairperson, a first vice-chair, and a second vice-chair along with the chair of the Land Use and Preservation Committee and chair of the Quality of Life Committee. Other UCAB members provide liaison to various other County boards and committees.

**Issues** After an organizational retreat in July, the UCAB and each of its committees meets monthly from September through June. The UCAB's committees study a wide variety of issues and help to craft the board's resulting recommendations. The Land Use and Preservation Committee has reviewed and commented on master planning practices in the Upcounty, the County's Annual Growth Policy, development pressures on the Agricultural Reserve, the evolution of the Life Sciences Center at Shady Grove, issues faced by agricultural and related businesses, affordable housing, and growth of the Germantown Campus of Montgomery College. The Quality of Life Committee has reviewed and commented on out-of-school programs for youths, programs for immigrant families and children at risk, mental health services, library services, safety of young drivers and pedestrians, public safety, services for seniors, homeland security and emergency management. Positions have been taken on many of these issues while others may continue to be examined for comment.

**Recommendations** During the year, UCAB interacts formally and informally with county officials, county and state agency staff, and community leaders in order to understand issues comprehensively before forwarding recommendations to the County Executive and/or County Council. UCAB also meets with the Executive to discuss Upcounty priorities and to summarize their work at their annual meeting, and traditionally, the Executive's priorities for both the operating budget and the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) have been responsive to UCAB's recommendations. The Board has also hosted receptions for officials and community leaders in order to promote networking and the sharing of ideas. On an annual basis, the board meets with State legislators who represent the Upcounty area in Annapolis, and various county department heads to explore issues and solutions. Additionally, UCAB traditionally hosts an annual forum to solicit community comments on the CIP. Those comments are then prioritized

by the board and forwarded to Executive Branch departments and the County Executive.

UCAB is staffed by the Upcounty Regional Services team. The Director, Catherine Matthews, can be contacted at 240.777.8000 or via e-mail at [upcounty.citizen@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:upcounty.citizen@montgomerycountymd.gov).

# Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board

## 2009-2010



*\*Members are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council.*

### **2009-2010 Board Members:**

Robert Thompson, Chair (Darnestown), Joel Cockrell, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair (Damascus), Robert Owolabi, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair (Boys), Nick Alexander (Gaithersburg), Andres Aviles (Germantown), Joanne Atay (Germantown), Heinz Bachmann (Dickerson), Terramika Bellamy (Clarksburg), Juan Cardenas (Gaithersburg), Bradley Davis (North Potomac), George Donovan (Shady Grove), Cherian Eapen (Clarksburg), Andrew Einsmann (Germantown), Natalia Farrar (Shady Grove), James King (Montgomery Village), Matthew Leakin (Germantown), Doug Noble (Damascus), Christopher Snead (Darnestown), Brenda Whitehurst (Potomac), Rebecca Walker (Germantown)



## ***UCAB Committee Chairs***

Land Use and Preservation – Bradley Davis

Social Issues – Juan Cardenas

Transportation Committee – Robert Owolabi

## ***Liaisons to Other Boards and Committees***

Airpark Liaison Committee – Joanne Atay

Dickerson Facilities Implementation Group – Heinz Bachmann

Germantown Master Plan Community Advisory Committee – Andres Aviles

Permitting Services Advisory Committee – George Donovan

Shady Grove Implementation Advisory Committee – George Donovan

Smart Growth Initiative Implementation Advisory Group – Andres Aviles

Speed Camera Advisory Committee – Nick Alexander

Upcounty Regional Recreation Advisory Board – Cherian Eapen

# *Issues and Positions*

Throughout the year, each committee examines issues that directly affect the Upcounty. Sometimes, a committee may elevate an issue to the full Board for further discussion and to forward a recommendation to the County Executive and/or County Council.

## **Land Use and Preservation Committee**

The Land Use and Preservation Committee examines issues from a variety of perspectives that include general land use, community impact, historic preservation, and infrastructure necessary to support successful neighborhoods and economic development. The following issues were addressed this past year.

The Land Use and Preservation Committee's discussions noted in this report have been driven primarily by two major issues: (1) the growing budget shortfall and the county's response to that shortfall through significant cuts in a number of critical services used by county residents; and (2) the Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan (formerly the Gaithersburg West Master Plan) which encompasses Johns Hopkins University's Vision 2030, a transit-oriented development concept that is planned for the Life Sciences Center at Shady Grove

## **Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Priorities**

On July 15, 2009, the Board wrote to County Executive Leggett on behalf of UCAB and identified the Capital Improvement Program ("CIP") priorities for the Upcounty region. **At the outset, UCAB stressed its continued support for Montgomery County's Smart Growth Initiative. UCAB also expressed its support for a number of transportation and land use projects including: (1) the Watkins Mill Road Extension Project; (2) upgrades to the County's traffic management system; (3) an enhanced water and sewer maintenance and replacement program; (4) the Corridor Cities Transitway; (5) the Mid-County Corridor Study; (6) Wisteria Drive street lighting; (7) the extension of Father Hurley Boulevard; (8) the extension of Woodfield Road; and (9) improvements to sidewalks and bicycle paths to facilitate greater pedestrian safety and mobility.**

## **Montgomery County Growth Policy**

On September 15, 2009, County Executive Leggett wrote to then County Council President Andrews transmitting his comments on the Planning Board Draft 2009 Growth Policy. On September 21, 2009, Rollin Stanley, the Director of the Planning Department discussed the Growth Policy with the full Board. He stated that only about 4% of the county has been left undeveloped and of that remainder, about half of the land is in the Agricultural Reserve. Subsequently, on November 5, 2009, the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board sent their comments and recommendation to the County Council with respect to matters related to the proposed 2009-2011 growth policy. **The Growth Policy should also examine growth from a "quality of life" perspective by looking at transportation, recreation, police, fire and medical emergency services for both new and current county residents. The Growth Policy is too complex and thus should be simplified where feasible. The Growth Policy should also: a) provide a varied menu of economic development incentives; b) provide incentives for larger condominium units for growing families in Smart Growth areas; c) address potential impacts of traffic passing through the county from neighboring jurisdictions; d) continue to correlate new development with transportation improvements**

through the staging process; and e) make it less expensive to build where there is existing infrastructure and direct focus on impact fees and allowing more density in CR zones. In addition, since the county's population is aging, and in order to grow the tax base, the Growth Policy should strive to attract a younger population with incentives such as their desired housing type.

### **Code Enforcement Legislation**

On November 23, 2009, the Land Use Committee hosted Assistant Chief Administrative Officer Thomas Street to discuss County Executive Leggett's proposed Code Enforcement Legislation. One bill in particular, #22-09, was discussed with Mr. Street. That proposed bill dealt with the Notice of Violations and citations from Code Enforcement staff and allowed staff to move directly to the issuance of citations. The Land Use and Preservation Committee raised concerns with Mr. Street that an individual who may not have been aware of the codes would immediately receive a citation without first being apprised of the violation and permitted the chance to remedy the situation. **The Land Use and Preservation Committee crafted the following additional language that was supported by Mr. Street, and approved by the full UCAB on January 4, 2010:**

*Code enforcement staff are authorized to issue a citation for any code violation without first issuing a Notice of Violation for any repeat violators. For any property owner who has not previously been cited for a code violation, the Code enforcement staff must first issue a Notice of Violation prior to issuing a citation.*

### **Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan**

The Montgomery County Council voted unanimously on May 4, 2010 to approve the "Great Seneca Science Corridor" Master Plan and marked the end of a 15 month debate. The long-term plan—formerly known as the Gaithersburg West Master Plan—will allow the area near Shady Grove Road and Darnestown Road to develop into one of the nation's premier areas for scientific research and development. The County Executive, the UCAB, several local homeowners and citizen organizations in affected areas and the County Council have studied the proposal intently since early 2009. A major portion of the plan involves the former Belward Farm that was purchased by Johns Hopkins University. The University has long sought to incorporate that land as part of the Life Science Center area's development. UCAB facilitated the discussions on the University's plans by bringing the groups together and assuring constant dialog amongst all affected parties. Over the course of the year UCAB held several meetings with representatives from the "Scale-It-Back" group, other affected local citizenry, Johns Hopkins University, the Planning Department, and the County Executive's staff. UCAB members attended several public hearings and testified on the plan, always working to represent fairly and balance the concerns of local citizenry as well as the benefits of long term economic development. All of this was in the effort to assure that all sides were heard in what was sometimes an emotional debate. On April 13, 2010, the County Council reached key agreements on the plan, including a reduction of the maximum allowable development in the plan from the proposed 20 million square feet to 17.5 million square feet. An amendment was added to require

the County's Planning Board to work with existing neighborhoods to monitor evolving transportation issues of the plan. According to the approved plan, the Great Seneca Science Corridor would allow a maximum of 9,000 dwelling units and approximately 52,500 jobs. Most of the new development cannot proceed until funding is obtained for the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT). The CCT would be either a light rail or bus rapid transitway transportation system extending from the Shady Grove Metro Station to Clarksburg. Included in the Great Seneca Science Corridor plan is the proposed creation of a 21st Century Life Sciences Center. The area will include housing and retail uses with the hope that many of those who work in the Life Sciences Center Zone will elect to live nearby and reduce regular use of automobiles. The plan also calls for the urban square at the CCT station to be "a hub of daily activity with space for special events and gatherings, as well as some community retail for the convenience of CCT riders, workers and area residents." The complete Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan can be found at <http://montgomeryplanning.org/community/gaithersburg/index.shtm> The County Council's resolution to approve the Plan can be found at [http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/council/pdf/agenda/col/2010/100504/20100504\\_4.pdf](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/council/pdf/agenda/col/2010/100504/20100504_4.pdf) **UCAB extends a special thanks to our own Brad Davis, Chairman of the Land Use Committee, who diligently followed the deliberations by the Planning Department and the County Council, and worked closely with residents in the affected areas to identify concerns with the original plan. UCAB believes that these efforts, combined with the efforts of others in County Government and County Council, resulted in: a) a 13% reduction in the overall scope of the plan's development; and b) a strict staging requirement which limits development prior to full funding for the CCT. We also believe that the outcome is fair, and that all sides have been considered.**

### **Shady Grove Implementation Advisory Committee**

This committee, appointed by the County Council, is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Shady Grove Sector Plan. UCAB was represented on the committee by George Donovan. The execution of the Shady Grove Sector Plan is contingent on the procurement of sites to which the existing facilities, located along Crabbs Branch Way, can be moved. The Committee was briefed twice regarding the procurement status of the Casey 6 and 7 sites, the Webb Tract, and the GE/Finmarc site. The Finmarc site is now available so the Department of Liquor Control's offices move is imminent. No other moves are imminent but the Casey 6 and 7 procurement has progressed to the point that planning for the Ride On Equipment Maintenance Operations Center (EMOC) and Transportation's Highway Services Division facilities is underway. The Crabbs Branch Temporary Workers Center will be moved to the Casey 6 and 7 area when EMOC and Highway Services move. The Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) food distribution facility and the Parks Department's training facility will move to the Webb Tract. A site for the MCPS buses and maintenance facility has not been determined.

The Committee reviewed the site plans for EMOC and Highway Services in September 2009 and April 2010. Suggestions made in September were incorporated in the more detailed site plan presented in April.

The Committee also reviewed and commented on plans for residential development on the east side of Redland Road as well as possibilities and plans for traffic flow and landscaping treatment for the areas adjacent to the Casey 6 and 7 sites.

**The Committee initiated action to address pedestrian accessibility to the Shady Grove Metro complex from areas north of the Metro access road that merges with Route 370 and that is adjacent to the underpass for Crabbs Branch Way. Pedestrians have been crossing high volume and high speed roads to access Metro while WMATA has focused on access for Redland Road which is not a pedestrian-friendly route to Metro. The Committee noted that this situation was contrary to the efforts to promote pedestrian accommodations and safety to Metro. A plan for more direct pedestrian access is being prepared as a result of the Committee's recommendation.**

## **Quality of Life Committee**

The Quality of Life Committee (formerly the Social Issues Committee) has spent the past year exploring issues and concerns related to the quality of life in the northern communities of Montgomery County. The committee met once a month for information gathering on a wide range of social, cultural, educational, recreational, health and safety issues. Clearly the difficult economic environment faced by the county, state, and nation, has impacted many of the resources and services related to our quality of life. The work of the committee was difficult as it focused its attention on providing recommendations and actionable suggestions for the benefit of citizens of the upcounty region. The following narrative is a summary of our work.

### **Public Safety**

We are very fortunate to have not one, but two new fire stations in the upcounty region. The opening of the Kingsview Fire Station #22 in the spring of 2009 and the anticipated ribbon cutting for the Milestone Fire Station in summer 2010, provide vital services for the citizens of the upcounty region. The new central maintenance facility for fire equipment in Rockville brings consistent and methodical support to keep the vehicles in good repair. We celebrate these events as the success of prior Upcounty Advisory Boards' hard work and collaboration with the County Executive to bring effective change to the community.

**The Upcounty Citizen's Advisory Board recommends the continuation of CIP funding for the 6<sup>th</sup> District Police Station (along with the proposed Watkins Mill Road extension).** The population of the county approaches 1 million citizens with a significant amount of growth in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> districts. The 6<sup>th</sup> district has outgrown its current 8,000 ft<sup>2</sup> facility that opened in 2001. The new 32,000 ft<sup>2</sup> facility would accommodate the growth in officer/civilian staff and provide increased services for residents.

Commander Tom Didone of the 5<sup>th</sup> district, along with his advisory board and staff, are commended for the new anti-gang outreach program for fifth grade students. **We encourage elementary school principals to participate in this program that shows young students the positive side of police work and that will hopefully deter them from criminal lifestyles.** It is an excellent example of a low-cost alternative for the inactive Gang Resistance Education And

Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program. **The Quality of Life committee encourages the 6<sup>th</sup> district commander, Captain Parker-Loan, to explore a similar program in the Gaithersburg area.**

**Additionally, we support the Safe Biking program in the 5<sup>th</sup> police district in which the police, in collaboration with the district's Police Advisory Board and the Department of Transportation, are working together to explore the possibility of adding bike lanes or shoulders to increase bike rider safety on narrow upcounty roads.**

### **Challenges Faced by Homeowners and Homeowner/Condo Associations**

Montgomery County is experiencing a second wave of foreclosures due to the weak economy. Some families that had struggled to weather the first round of hardship are now faced with renewed pressure and with depleted savings. The committee received an update from the Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) concerning the Focused Neighborhood Assistance program underway in the Germantown area. This program, using federal stimulus funds, is making a difference by helping homeowners with weatherization and routine maintenance of their homes. **The Upcounty Citizen's Advisory Board encourages using grants and/or federal funds to continue to provide these kinds of services to the community.**

The Upcounty Regional Service Center (URSC) has also been an important resource for homeowners who are facing foreclosure. DHCA maintains a small staff in the URSC to provide foreclosure intervention counseling for homeowners struggling to make their monthly mortgage payments. **We support the continuation of this necessary program.**

The Quality of Life committee also listened to several homeowner/condo association representatives discuss the challenges they face in governing and maintaining their communities. Two key issues made a lasting impression—the need for good public safety to maintain quality neighborhoods, and the impact of delinquent payment of association dues. Unanimously stated, the presence of police in the community served to provide residents with a sense of security. **Sub-stations are so important to some communities that they are willing to provide financial support to maintain their presence. Our committee encourages this type of mutually beneficial collaboration.**

Like the county government, homeowner and condo associations are facing budget shortfalls due to lower revenue collected from association fees. This impacts the services they are able to provide—maintenance of association owned roadways, common areas, snow removal, etc. **The UCAB realizes that these responsibilities are beyond the scope of county government but would urge officials to support action at the state level such as passage of priority liens legislation (HB842, HB29) that was introduced, but not passed by the 2010 Maryland General Assembly.**

### **Teen/Youth Programs**

The Quality of Life Committee met with Officer Dixon and Mr. Arevalo of the Street Outreach Network to hear about the launch of a new intervention program in the upcounty region and the importance of community outreach officers. The committee noted the reduction

in funding for the Recreation Department's Sports Academy at Seneca Valley High School and the reduction/elimination of community outreach officers. **The UCAB fully supported funding for Educational Facility Officers to facilitate communication between schools, police and services agencies. The committee recommends convening Educational Facility Officers and parent/community workgroups to develop creative ideas to recruit volunteers to help support programs for youth activities.**

The Upcounty Region Recreation Office staff and recreation center directors report that summer programs for youth are full despite the competition from schools and private programs. Year-round activities are maintained with available staff but could be improved with additional resources. **The Quality of Life committee advocates for expanding partnerships with community and business organizations to assist where possible.** In the next year, the committee hopes to explore the possibility of combining some youth activities offered by the Departments of Recreation, Libraries, and Parks, to streamline and provide additional opportunities for youth activities.

### **Education**

Three Parent Teacher Association (PTA) cluster coordinators and an area vice principal met with the UCAB Quality of Life Committee to talk about issues related to education. In general, the parents were pleased with the high-quality education provided by the public schools, especially when compared to other regions of the country. Of concern to the parents was maintaining funding for upcounty school construction/renovation projects planned in the current CIP. Gaithersburg High School and Seneca Valley High school were mentioned as needing high priority improvements, along with Ridgeview Middle School. Additionally, the PTA supports fully funding the Planned Asset Replacement Program (PLAR) to keep pace with scheduled maintenance for school buildings. **To decrease costs for the school system, it is recommended that MCPS and the Montgomery County Government continue to find new ways to collaborate and to reduce duplicate services. Particularly noted were the possible repurposing of retired county traffic cameras to be used for schools currently without camera systems, and looking at services such as trash pick-up.**

### **Public Health**

The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services worked diligently with the Center for Disease Control and local/community organizations to address threats from seasonal flu and H1N1 flu outbreaks. **The Quality of Life committee notes that in general, information was made available in a timely and accurate manner, clinics were well organized, and the needs of the community were taken care of. It was an excellent exercise and learning experience should a similar health issue arise.**



## **Other Areas of Interest and Concern**

### **Participation in the 2010 U.S. Census Partnership Program**

The UCAB enlisted to become a liaison in the U.S. Census Partnership Program. We applaud the support provided by the County's and Regional Services Centers and Office of Community Partnership in working diligently to provide important outreach to the community, in particular, the limited-English speaking communities.

### **Regional Service Centers**

The Upcounty Regional Service Center provides very important services for the community. It is difficult to understand the scope of how services will be affected by the budget reduction in FY2011 in terms of staff resources for the centers. Clearly, we are biased, because the UCAB receives outstanding support from the center director, Ms. Catherine Matthews, and the entire staff, but we also note the wide range of services the same center staff provides to the community. This staff is a focal point for responding to community concerns, providing critical community outreach and working with community leaders to improve our community. The opening of the Montgomery Works program that provides one stop career information, in addition to Health and Human Services, DHCA's Housing Assistance, Recreation and many others, all served by public transportation, provide thousands of upcounty community residents with efficient government services. There is a lot of synergy with the many types of services and it allows duplication of services to be exposed and realigned for efficiency. **The Quality of Life committee unequivocally supports the service center model used by Montgomery County Government for efficient government services. We hope that in the future, funding will allow additional staffing to coordinate and conduct this important work.**

## *2009-2010 UCAB Guest Speakers*

September 21, 2009	Rollin Stanley, Director Montgomery County Department of Planning
October 19, 2009	Patrice Cheatham Department of Housing & Community Affairs
November 16, 2009	Tom Street, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer Office of the County Executive Pam Saul, Delegate Rona Kramer's Office (District 14) Senator Robert Garagiola (District 15) Delegate Kathleen Dumais (District 15) Senator Nancy King (District 39) Delegate Kirill Reznik (District 39)
December 21, 2009	Rescheduled to January 4, 2010 due to Inclement Weather
January 4, 2010	No Invited Guests
February 22, 2010	Captain Thomas Didone, 5 <sup>th</sup> District Police, Germantown Officer Marcus Dixon, 5 <sup>th</sup> District Police, 5 <sup>th</sup> District Advisory Committee
March 15, 2010	Steve Traylor, Cinnamon Woods HOA Jim Oltmann, Cinnamon Woods HOA Dennis Barnes, North Village Homes Corp. Toni Negro, Center Court Condo HOA Mark Firley, South Village Homes Corp. Bill Holcomb, Maryland Place Homes Corp.
April 19, 2010	Councilmember Duchy Trachtenberg, Montgomery County Council Chief Richard Bowers, Fire and Rescue Service
May 17, 2010	Kathy Porter, Nonprofit Village Center Callum Murray, Rural Areas Planner, Planning Department
June 7, 2010	UCAB Annual Meeting
July 17, 2010	UCAB Planning Retreat

# *Testimonies and Positions*



## UPCOUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

July 15, 2009

The Honorable Isiah Leggett  
Montgomery County Executive  
101 Monroe Street  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Mr. Leggett:

On behalf of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board (UCAB), I am forwarding the following list of Capital Improvement Program (CIP) priorities for the Upcounty region that we think will help to improve the quality of life for our residents and businesses.

- UCAB supports the County's Smart Growth Initiative, and the components of that program being appropriately planned, reviewed, and executed over time.
- UCAB also supports the following major projects.
  - \* Multiple road and bridge infrastructure projects - notably the Watkins Mill Road Extension project;
  - \* Upgrades to the County's traffic management system;
  - \* An enhanced water and sewer maintenance and replacement program;
  - \* the Corridor Cities Transitway;
  - \* the North Potomac Community Recreation Center;
  - \* the 6th District police station project (linked to Watkins Mill Road Extension);
  - \* the Mid-County Corridor Study (M-83 road project);
  - \* the Germantown Urban Park;
  - \* Wisteria Drive street lighting;
  - \* Father Hurley Blvd. Extended;
  - \* Woodfield Road Extended; and
  - \* Darnestown Square Heritage Park.
- Additionally the Board supports improvements to sidewalks and bicycle paths to facilitate greater pedestrian safety and mobility, and investments in additional pedestrian and bicyclist safety programs.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer these recommendations and look forward to meeting with you on August 6.

Sincerely,

Robert Thompson



## UPCOUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

November 5, 2009

The Honorable Philip Andrews  
President  
Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Re: 2009-2011 Montgomery County Growth Policy

Dear Mr. Andrews:

On behalf of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board, we wish to convey our comments regarding the 2009-2011 Growth Policy currently under review by the County Council. UCAB views the Proposed County Growth Policy as more of an instrument that emphasizes projected county population growth, job growth, and land use/housing targets, with an objective of promoting “Smart Growth” (i.e. commercial and residential development around transportation and other infrastructure) environments given the limited availability of land for housing and development.

We think a broader policy approach is needed that is reflected in our following comments.

1. The Growth Policy should examine growth from the Quality of Life perspective (e.g. transportation, recreation, police, fire, and medical emergency services), for both new County residents, as well as current residents.
2. The Growth Policy is too complex, and takes too long to review and understand. This has been voiced from multiple perspectives, including lawyers, builders, residents, and county employees. The Growth Policy should be simplified, where feasible.
3. Given the economic challenges the county, state, and country are facing, the Growth Policy should provide a varied menu of economic development incentives that improve the quality of life.
4. Given the challenges of providing affordable housing, as well as the lack of incentives to build larger (i.e. multiple bedroom) condo units for growing families in Smart Growth areas, the Growth Policy should provide incentives for such housing.

5. The traffic/transportation elements of the Growth Policy should address potential impacts of traffic passing through Montgomery County from neighboring jurisdictions, which is a silent factor in the formulas and scenarios that in turn affect the growth that is permitted. The policy should also address or incorporate conclusions of the Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) developed by the Regional Transportation Planning Board at the Council of Governments (COG). In addition, the Growth Policy should strongly correlate new development with transportation improvements through the staging process.
6. The Growth Policy focuses on promoting Smart Growth as a way to make better use of available land. We know that it is usually less expensive to build where there is less infrastructure; however, we need to make it less expensive to build where infrastructure already exists. Some suggested areas to focus on include impact fees and allowing more density in CR zones.
7. Statistics presented by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) indicate the County population is aging. In order to grow the tax base, the Growth Policy should attract a younger population with incentives such as their desired housing type that support their lifestyles.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Robert C. Thompson  
Chairman

cc: County Executive Isiah Leggett  
Catherine Matthews  
Robert Owolabi  
Brad Davis



## UPCOUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

January 11, 2010

The Honorable Isiah Leggett  
Montgomery County Executive  
101 Monroe Street  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Mr. Leggett:

The Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board discussed with Assistant Chief Administrative Officer Tom Street the proposed legislation #22-09 that addresses the Notice of Code Violation. Our specific concern was that an individual, who might not know the particular code, would receive a citation with fine without a prior Notice of Violation. The analogy to similar situations with homeowner associations was raised where a homeowner who may have not known the HOA rules, would receive a code violation penalty without first being issued a notice, and given an opportunity to correct the violation.

As result of our discussion, Mr. Street concurred with our concern and requested that we propose language to amend the bill. The underlined text below is our proposed additional language.

Code enforcement staff are authorized to issue a citation for any code violation without first issuing a Notice of Violation for any repeat violators. For any property owner who has not previously received a code violation, the Code enforcement staff must first issue a Notice of Violation prior to issuing a citation.

We appreciate your consideration of this recommendation and we continue to support legislation that fosters attractive and safe communities.

Sincerely,

Robert Thompson  
Chair



## UPCOUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

January 11, 2010

The Honorable Isiah Leggett  
Montgomery County Executive  
101 Monroe Street  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Mr. Leggett:

The Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board has discussed our FY2011-2016 CIP priorities for the Upcounty region. While there are many important ones, the Board has decided to highlight key priorities given the financial constraints the County is witnessing on capital and operating budgets. The Board is recommending two key priorities in each of the three categories listed below, with emphasis on quality of life for county residents. Those categories are:

- (1) Broadest Impact to County Residents – the project affects the majority of county residents
- (2) Significant Community Impact – the project makes a significant positive impact to a community and surrounding communities
- (3) Near Future Completion – the project is small enough in scope to be completed in a relatively short period of time

Within this context, we are recommending that funding be directed to the following.

### Broadest Impact to County Residents

1. Immediate upgrades to the County's Traffic Management System
2. An enhanced Water and Sewer Maintenance and Replacement Program

### Significant Community Impact

1. Maintain the schedule for the 6<sup>th</sup> District Police Station Project which is aligned with the Watkins Mill Road Extension project
2. Maintain the schedule for the future North Potomac Community Recreation Center

### Near Future Completion

1. Maintain the schedule for the Woodfield Road Extended project
2. Maintain the schedule for completing the street lighting along Wisteria Drive in Germantown.

As always, we appreciate the opportunity to provide input for your difficult budget decisions.

Sincerely,

Robert Thompson  
Chair





## UPCOUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

February 25, 2010

The Honorable Isiah Leggett  
Montgomery County Executive  
101 Monroe Street  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Subject: Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board's 2011 Operating Budget Comments

Dear Mr. Leggett:

I am reporting on behalf of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board (UCAB), where we work closely with Cathy Matthews and her staff at the Upcounty Regional Services Center and are keenly aware of the fiscal challenges the County faces and the difficult task the Executive Branch faces in making some very tough financial decisions.

We understand that:

- A) All County departments need to continue to reduce spending;
- B) Everyone may lose something that is important to himself or his constituency due to budget cuts.
- C) Revenue is a moving target due to changing levels of tax receipts and no guarantee of consistent levels of state aid.

We make the following recommendations:

- 1) Vigorously pursue the elimination of any and all wasteful spending wherever it still exists.
- 2) Review County personnel policies and union contracts, benchmark them against other jurisdictions and private industry, and make changes to policies and reopen union contracts where it makes sense.
- 3) Continue to examine the structure of County government to find further opportunities for consolidation between areas of overlapping responsibility, resulting in operation synergies and cost savings.
- 4) UCAB recognizes the necessity for the careful development and redevelopment of parts of the County, updating of Master Plans and their development towards an urban environment for housing, jobs, and transportation over the next 20-30 years according to the Growth Policy. However, the protection of the Agricultural Reserve and of the agricultural community and culture of Montgomery County remains one of our and should remain one of your top priorities.

- 5) If the County and the State need more revenue, it should be gained in the form of consumption taxes and/or user fees, so that ordinary citizens feel they have some control over what they pay. Increasing property or income taxes is a morale-buster, especially in the middle of a recession.
- 6) The County has increased its investment in acquiring properties for affordable housing. This makes sense and needs to be continued, especially in a depressed real estate market.
- 7) School construction capital projects should continue to be supported to assure that the physical foundation for our world-class public schools remains viable.
- 8) The operating budgets for public safety agencies should not be reduced on a per capita basis year to year, unless there are extraordinary items.
- 9) Police presence in all public areas including schools, shopping areas, neighborhoods, street, and road patrols should be maintained and in some areas increased where there is a need or a trend. Along with that, adequate operating funds should exist to maintain and improve the police use of technology and other tools to increase their effectiveness.
- 11) Sufficient money should be available to insure that all Fire and Emergency Response personnel have adequate personal equipment, access to technology and that adequate maintenance programs exist for their vehicles and facilities.
- 12) Service provided through HHS and its affiliates to the disadvantaged, needy, ill, unemployed, and seniors should be increased to reflect the increased demand for these services, due to demographics and the recession.
- 13) The Departments of Recreation and Public Libraries should work more closely together to better assure places for youth to go on a more coordinated basis. Recreation centers and libraries both represent positive environments for youth. Coordinating their hours of operation and certain activities and resources with one another would maximize their effectiveness while reducing overall costs. Additional user fees based on an ability-to-pay sliding scale should be considered for both of these areas.
- 14) The County should work with its human resources department and unions to put together a real and robust volunteer program and a senior service program. As the population “ages in place,” there will be many hundreds or potentially thousands of people who would be interested in giving back to their community by volunteering to work in County departments. In other cases it may be appropriate to hire part-time workers, who may also be retirees, for their particular expertise for handling short or medium term assignments.
- 15) The Upcounty Regional Services Center is a coordinator of County services to thousands of residents. It is the face, the point of service, and the ambassador of County government on a daily basis. Its role, in fact the roles of all the regional services centers, becomes more important in difficult times.
- 16) The County should maintain and in some cases increase its investment in road maintenance, resurfacing, and re-striping, especially as it relates to safety. This includes snow removal, and the inevitable repairs required after a season of snow and freezing temperatures.
- 17) The County should consider a “summer internship incentive program”, whereby employers who hire Maryland students ages 21 and under to work between 5/01/10 and 9/01/10 and pay them at least \$2000, will receive a note of special recognition from the County Executive or something similar from the Department of Economic Development, as a sponsor of positive student development.

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18) Operating funds for the Traffic Management System Upgrade are critical and we continue to emphasize the need to fully upgrade and maintain this system.

UCAB continues to be supportive of the Smart Growth Initiative (SGI). The SGI will help strengthen the County's tax base by creating new, high-quality jobs and facilitating growth and expansion of the County's biotechnology sector. The SGI invests already planned capital spending in newer facilities that can serve the County for decades to come, rather than putting monies into old or inadequate facilities. By relocating the 100-acre County Service Park, located right next to the Shady Grove Metro, SGI will promote development of thousands of new, transit-oriented housing units, many of them affordable and/or workforce housing.

UCAB believes that responsible government should maintain essential services and programs while preserving the County's coveted triple-A bond rating. New programs and most initiatives should be off the table unless a revenue source provides the funding.

Sincerely,



Robert C. Thompson  
Chairman

cc: Catherine Matthews  
Jewru Bandeh

# *Upcounty Regional Services Center*



## UPCOUNTY REGIONAL SERVICES CENTER

Isiah Leggett  
*County Executive*

Catherine E. Matthews  
*Director*

Greetings from the Director . . .

I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board for their dedication in representing our Upcounty residents, businesses, and organizations so well. Several controversial issues were addressed by the Board this year: code enforcement legislation, youth and education-related issues, the Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan, the Smart Growth Implementation strategy, struggling homeowner associations, and the budget. Their interest in making sure that Upcounty voices were heard was reflected in their taking the initiative to facilitate the local debate around future development at the Life Sciences Center. Their prioritization of Upcounty projects in the capital budget was requested by County Executive Leggett and the County Council. Their “out-of-the-box” approach to the Growth Policy was risky, but sincerely offered for the County Council’s consideration. In addition, the Board has continued to show leadership in addressing problems that have long-term implications for the community and in offering solutions that promote collaboration between agencies and grassroots organizations.

As personal schedules get busier and challenges loom larger than ever, our Upcounty residents and businesses still take time to look out for their community. As budgets grow leaner, this will become more and more important. County resources must be supplemented by the community’s knowledge, ingenuity, and desire to work together in order to keep “the village” safe, vibrant and enjoyable for all.

Once again, my staff has been fantastic in providing a consistent level of excellent customer service. We’ve seen agencies move from the Center while we work to bring other services in to meet the needs of our evolving part of the county. As a result of the continued fiscal crisis, the five Regional Services Centers in the county have restructured our mission and staff composition. We will consist of three staff: a Director; a Program Manager who will assist the Director in identifying and managing community issues to resolution; and a Sr. Executive Aide who is responsible for managing our office’s administrative responsibilities, communications, and customer service initiatives. I look forward to working next year with Nancy Hislop and Andrea Bush. We will miss Jewru Bandeh, Nona Watson and Barbara Pinnock who will move on to new challenges, but I know they will be assets for the next team they join.

In closing, I want to thank Board Chair Bob Thompson for his insightfulness, and leadership. I also want to thank the many County and State officials and staff who offered their valuable time and knowledge to assist the Board. We will continue to “bring the County closer to you!”

Respectfully,

Catherine Matthews, Director

***Independence Day Celebration on July 4<sup>th</sup> at South Germantown Recreation Park!***

## *Upcounty Regional Services Center Team*



*From left to right:*

**Nona Watson** – Program Manager for Beallsville, Barnesville, Comus, Darnestown, Dickerson, Germantown, North Potomac and Poolesville

**Andrea Bush** – Senior Executive Aide

**Jewru Bandeh** – Assistant Director

**Nancy Hislop** – Program Manager for Greater Gaithersburg, Goshen, Derwood, Damascus, Laytonsville and Shady Grove

**Barbara Pinnock** – Administrative Assistant

*Front and center:*

**Catherine Matthews** – Director

## *Upcounty Regional Services Center Boundary Map*



Proudly serving over 280,000 residents of Barnesville, Beallsville, Boyds, Clarksburg, Damascus, Darnestown, Derwood, Dickerson, Gaithersburg, Germantown, Goshen, Laytonsville, Montgomery Village, North Potomac, Poolesville, Tobytown and Washington Grove

# **The Upcounty Regional Services Center**

The Upcounty Regional Services Center (URSC) is a 100,000 square foot facility that, in 2009-2010, housed 12 agencies that offered a total of 22 different services. It is located at 12900 Middlebrook Road in Germantown, Maryland and provides a county presence for the northern region of Montgomery County where a third of the county's population or more than 280,000 people reside. The service area encompasses approximately 200 square miles and is bordered on the north by Frederick County, on the east by the Olney area, on the south by the Shady Grove Metro area and Rockville, and on the west by the Potomac River.

## **Administration Office**

The center is anchored by an Administration Office that functions as a link to the County Executive's Office; coordinates policy making and service delivery that focus on the particular needs of the Upcounty area; and offers effective and timely problem-solving assistance to neighborhoods, individuals, community organizations, businesses, and agencies. More specifically, the team offers an effective, timely liaison between Montgomery County and its citizens and businesses, and works with individuals, community groups, regional citizens advisory boards, and other public agencies to:

- research and disseminate information;
- identify and assess regional problems and issues and facilitate solutions;
- bring community perspective to major policy issues;
- manage site evaluations for public facilities;
- promote a sense of community; and
- provide general on-site supervision of the center and build collaboration among partner agencies.

Major services provided to the public by the URSC Administration team this year included:

- providing information and making referrals for county and other governmental entities about programs and activities;
- coordinating and promoting community events to maximize citizen participation (i.e. town hall meetings, budget forums);
- assisting individuals, groups, and neighborhoods in developing solutions to local problems;
- leveraging funds/resources for community-based initiatives (i.e. youth development partnerships, transit station safety);
- sponsoring public education workshops and programs (i.e. shredding of personal documents, housing, etc.);
- selling fare media for Ride On service;
- serving as the public's regional access point for bus route information; Metro Access applications for senior citizens, compost bins, federal and state tax forms, and voter registration forms;
- serving as a regional repository and the public's point-of-access for government and regional planning documents (master plans, sector plans, county budgets, Capital Improvements Program, maps, county employment, etc.);
- providing a public access computer for county job searches;
- participating in the planning and implementation of neighborhood, community, and county-wide festivals and educational events (Oktoberfest, Germantown Glory, Month of the Young Child, Housing Fair, etc.)



- providing education and strategic-planning assistance to groups, neighborhoods and communities for disaster/emergency preparedness;
- coordinating the scheduling of facility meeting rooms and space;
- providing facilitative mediation and alternative dispute resolution services; and
- disseminating center and community information and special announcements through the center's webpage, mailing lists, monthly newsletter and web-based events calendar;

In an effort to bridge the gap between citizen needs and county public services, the center housed services from a variety of other agencies and organizations.

### **Partner Agencies Providing Satellite Services in 2009-2010:**

#### **Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County**

Call 301-942-7700 to schedule an appointment.

#### **Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity**

**240-777-4940**

This new residents welcome center offers information and referral services, County programs and services, offered by the County government as well as community organizations and non-profits. At this center, Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity offers English as a second language (ESOL) and citizenship classes and pro bono legal services. Call for more information regarding other upcoming programs.

#### **Housing Initiative Partnership (HIP)**

**301-916-5946**

DHCA/HIP provides foreclosure intervention counseling for Montgomery County homeowners struggling to make their mortgage payments. Bi-monthly foreclosure prevention workshops are provided followed by a one-on-one appointment with a certified housing counselor to discuss options available for families to remain in their homes or transition into other sustainable housing arrangements. Bilingual counseling services are available.

#### **MontgomeryWorks—Department of Economic Development/Division of Workforce Services**

**240-777-2050**

MontgomeryWorks is Montgomery County's "One-Stop Career Center," where state, local, and community businesses work together to provide employment and training assistance to job seekers and employers in one place. The center provides computer access, workshops, job listings and access to career fairs, employer recruitment events, employment supportive services, and other career resources to all customers at no cost.

### **Other Agencies Housed at the Center**

#### **Department of Recreation, Upcounty Region**

**240-777-6940**

Upcounty residents can register for all programs offered by the Department of Recreation, receive information on any program or facility in the County that falls under the auspices of the Department and provides Recreation Center Access card processing. Staff organizes and supervises a comprehensive recreational program seasonally for after school classes, teen clubs, community centers, special events and summer fun centers with emphasis on programs for school-aged youth.

#### **Park Permits**

**240-495-2480**

This division under M-NCPPC issues permits for park facilities.

**Montgomery County Conference & Visitors Bureau****301-916-0698**

The Bureau promotes tourism to Montgomery County and offers free brochures on accommodations, dining, attractions, and activities. Also available are Maryland State Highway maps and travel guides, the County and State calendar of events, and souvenirs.

**Peppertree Children's Center****301-540-1170**

Montgomery County, as part of a commitment to families and children, provides space in many public buildings for community child care. Peppertree Children's Center is a contractor to the Department of Health & Human Services and offers full-time and part-time care for children ages 6 weeks through 12 years. Morning preschool is also offered. NAEYC accredited.

**Department of Health and Human Services*****Housing Stabilization Services/Emergency Services*****240-777-4448**

Rental assistance  
Eviction prevention  
Foreclosure avoidance  
Court ordered evictions  
Past due or disconnected utilities  
Burial assistance  
Information and referral for food and prescriptions  
Homeless assessment services for families with children

***Income Support Programs*****240-777-3420**

Temporary Cash Assistance for families  
Food Stamp Program  
Transitional Emergency, Medical and Housing Assistance (TEMHA) for residents who are totally disabled and cannot work  
Medical Assistance

***Public Health*****240-777-3380**

Maternal and Child case management, home visitation  
"Access" nurse service, including assisting clients with Health Choice access as well as enrolling women into the County maternity program and acting as a health resource to walk-in clients  
Children's immunization clinics  
Pregnancy tests, information and referral

***Service Eligibility Unit (SEU)*****240-777-3591**

Helps find health coverage for uninsured Montgomery County residents through: Maryland Children's Health Program, Prenatal Care, Care for Kids, Dental  
Provides information and phone numbers for food, shelter, and clothing needs  
Financial eligibility required

***Dental Program*****240-777-3290**

General dental services to children 0-17 years  
General dental services to maternity clients enrolled in the HHS maternity program  
Emergency service limited to preliminary evaluation and provided to children and seniors who are established clients.

***Child Welfare*****240-777-1742**

Continuing protective service, foster care service, case management, and home visitation; assist with family reunification. Aftercare services, in-home monitoring of children returned to families.

***Guide Youth Services*****301-972-0307**

Serving youth and families from five school cluster communities in Clarksburg, Germantown, Damascus, and Poolesville. Services include individual and family counseling, psycho-educational/skills groups, information and referral, crisis intervention, community outreach/education, and tutoring.

***Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF)*****240-777-2746**

This regional CUPF office offers scheduling of meeting rooms at the Upcounty Regional Services Center, school facilities, library meeting rooms, Executive Office Building space, Council Office Building space, and school fields for community use in the Upcounty area.

***Montgomery County Public Schools******Office of Organizational Development*****301-601-0300**

The mission of the Office is the Organizational Development of a leading, self-renewing organization focused on achieving the school system goals by strengthening the knowledge, skills, beliefs, and practices of Montgomery County Public School's staff and stakeholders.

# *Upcounty Communities*

Barnesville, Beallsville, Dickerson  
Boyds  
Clarksburg and Vicinity  
Damascus  
Darnestown  
Derwood  
Gaithersburg  
Germantown  
Goshen  
Laytonsville  
Montgomery Village  
North Potomac  
Poolesville  
Shady Grove  
Washington Grove

## **UPCOUNTY COMMUNITIES**

### **Barnesville, Beallsville and Dickerson**

Barnesville, Beallsville and Dickerson, three tiny towns by Washington metropolitan area standards, feature many of the County's Rural Rustic Roads, rural zoning ordinances, and preserved open spaces. Although the area has a long history of dairy farming, much of the agriculture in the region consists of full-time and part-time cattle farming, crop farming, nurseries, and, particularly, horse farming. With over 12,000 horses in the County, the equestrian industry continues to grow and to make a nearly \$85 million contribution to the local economy.

These towns and surrounding areas are also home to several industrial facilities, including the Resource Recovery Facility (also known as the incinerator), the Mirant power plant and the privately owned Neutron Products, which handles nuclear material for medical applications. The County's Dickerson Facilities Implementation Group, which is comprised of civic leaders, along with the Sugarloaf Citizens Association, the incorporated Town of Barnesville, and a liaison from the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board, is a strong advocate for regulatory compliance at these facilities and is vigilant about preserving the rural landscape of the region. These civic representatives, the County, the State, and the facilities themselves are ongoing partners in balancing industrial, environmental and community needs.

### **Boyd**

Affectionately known by its residents as "Home in the Country," Boyd is on the edge of the county's prized Agricultural Reserve, adjacent to the developing Germantown area as well as the 1,843 acre Black Hill Regional Park. After a decades-long struggle to prevent the development of a rock quarry, a landfill and a dense housing development, the Boyd community breathed a collective sigh of relief as more than 1,600 acres of previously corporate-owned land was placed in permanent preservation in recent years. The community and neighboring commuters were also pleased when a planned closure of the MARC train station was averted through community efforts and proposed legislation by the county's State delegation.

### **Clarksburg and Vicinity**

Clarksburg was settled in 1752 by William Clark who was a trader with the Seneca Indians. That same year Michael Dowden received a patent for forty acres on what is now Hammerhill Farm where he established a tavern, Dowden's Ordinary, which was the midway stagecoach stop between Georgetown and Frederick City on the Old Frederick Road. The ordinary was visited by many travelers including General Braddock who was encamped there en route to Fort DuQuesne during the French and Indian Wars and Andrew Jackson who dined at the ordinary while traveling to the federal city of Washington. In the mid 1800's Clarksburg was a bustling crossroads with general stores, tanneries, and blacksmith and wheelwright shops serving the local farming community. As the nineteenth century came to a close, the town had become a sleepy hamlet and would continue as such for the entire twentieth century.

Clarksburg is now transitioning from its long bucolic history to its emergence as the county's last city along the I-270 corridor. A recent study was done to determine streetscape design guidelines for the historic district which will provide a distinct identity for the district

while complementing the new town center. A report should be completed in the fall of 2008. The first phase of residential development began with the Terrabrook planned town center adding over one hundred new families to Clarksburg by the end of 2002 with an additional 1,200 dwelling units and a town center commercial center with offices, retail and restaurants planned for completion over the next several years. Clarksburg Town Center, owned and managed by Newland Communities, has been followed by Clarksburg Village, the largest development plan submitted to the Montgomery County Planning Board since Montgomery Village in the 1960's. Several other large residential developments have been completed or are underway or planned such as the Highlands of Clarksburg, Greenway Village (aka Arora Hills), and Cabin Branch which will bring the population to about 30,000 when completed.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission has worked closely with developers and the community to ensure that green space and parklands will be preserved, while Montgomery County Public Schools has planned for additional schools such as the new elementary school and high school which opened in 2006. The County also has plans for a new fire station, additional police presence and recreational facilities to meet the needs and expectations of its residents.

Clarksburg is also home to Montgomery County's new correctional facility which opened in March 2003 with a successful transfer of over 600 inmates from the Rockville jail. Staff at the Montgomery County Correctional Facility (MCCF) maintain an open dialogue with the community providing information and responding to concerns at the bi-monthly MCCF Community Advisory Group meetings attended by neighboring residents, civic and business leaders, and government representatives. MCCF Community Advisory Group members are committed to ensuring that the facility meets the needs of the inmates and the security concerns of the community.

## **Damascus**

Damascus is a rural commercial center and residential community located in the northeast corner of Montgomery County. It has been planned as one of the key points for the County's Agricultural Reserve and Rural Open Space initiatives. The Damascus town center is located at the headwaters of four major stream systems; the Patuxent River, Bennett Creek, Great Seneca Creek, and the Hawlings River, which give it a unique environmental system of great importance to the well-being of the Chesapeake Bay. The Revised Damascus Master Plan, while recognizing its environmental sensitivity by striving to create a green environment through the use of green technologies and reducing land use density in the Patuxent Watershed, provides a moderate amount of growth in and adjoining the town center. Moderate mixed uses in the town center, increased pedestrian and bicycle connections and increased housing opportunities are among the landmarks of the plan. Maintaining the unique contrast to the extensive development in nearby Clarksburg and adjoining counties is a paramount goal of the master plan.

Although not incorporated, Damascus is well-represented by several local organizations that work with County officials on community issues. Local schools are the heart of the community and experienced considerable over-crowding once development of the Clarksburg area was underway. The opening in 2004 of the new Rocky Hill Middle School and in 2006 of Clarksburg High School has since alleviated overcrowding in the Damascus School Cluster. The Damascus Community Recreation Center, which opened in 2004, has become a center of community activities and meetings. The Damascus Heritage Society has established a heritage

museum that highlights the history and heritage of the area. Committee members secured former portable classrooms from Montgomery County Public Schools for use as a temporary facility and gathered local artifacts for display. They have sponsored several successful fundraisers to obtain the matching funds required for a state grant and have sought the guidance of experienced curators for display design. The museum officially opened during the fall of 2009.

### **Darnestown**

The Darnestown area is approximately 12 square miles and is centered at the intersection of Darnestown and Seneca Roads. It was originally colonized in the 1750s. Darnestown Road (or Route 28) was an old Indian trail and is recognized as one of the oldest roads in Montgomery County. William Darne of Virginia, married Elizabeth Gassaway, the daughter of a wealthy landowner. They settled at the intersection of Darnestown and Seneca Roads and established an Inn and a tavern. In 1812, the area was named Darnestown in their honor. By the 1820's, the town began to blossom and hosted a wheelwright, the Grist Mill, a blacksmith, a physician, a post office and a variety of other businesses. The stagecoach passed through the area from Georgetown to the river. After the Civil war, Darnestown experienced an economic downturn due to the increased popularity of the railroad, which bypassed the area. The mill business decreased and some farmers tried their hand at tobacco farming. This proved to be unprofitable for most and many people left the area. It wasn't until World War II that Darnestown began to grow and prosper again. This was mainly due to the government hiring more employees and the push for an improved road system. Approximately 5,000 people live in the Darnestown area today where a small commercial village area exists at the same intersection as more than two and ½ centuries ago and its position along Route 28 is one of the key gateways to the Agricultural Preserve on the Western side of the county.

### **Derwood**

The small, unincorporated town of Derwood began its development in the late 1800's with the opening of the Metropolitan Branch of the B & O Railroad. Although the town served as a commercial center, it did not experience the accelerated growth that its neighbors, Rockville and Gaithersburg, experienced. In 1954, the Derwood Station was destroyed in a fire, and the town remained mostly undeveloped until the construction of Metro's Shady Grove Station in 1984.

Derwood is now a community of approximately 2,000 residents living primarily in single-family homes adjacent to Lake Needwood. As home to Metro's last stop on the Red Line, the area has become a major transit hub. In keeping with smart growth concepts, the revised Shady Grove Sector Plan designates the area surrounding the Metro station as a high-density residential and commercial area. Although at this time, the area immediately surrounding the Metro station remains an industrial park, the Smart Growth Initiative Implementation Advisory Group (SGIIAG) has been established by the County Executive to provide advice and guidance on matters relating to or arising out of the implementation of the Montgomery County Smart Growth Initiative.

### **Gaithersburg**

Gaithersburg is in the heart of Montgomery County and is the largest incorporated area in the Upcounty. The city has been recognized nationally as one of the top cities in which to live

in the United States and is home to a large number of home-based businesses. It started as a small settlement called Log Town in 1765 and was incorporated as the City of Gaithersburg in 1878. Now the city has a diverse population of more than 52,600 residents with 58% white, 14.5% African American, 14% Asian, and 20% of Hispanic origin. The city is administered by a mayor, city manager and city council government. It also has its own planning commission and board of appeals that oversee development and zoning matters.

Gaithersburg features several mixed-use developments that make use of many “smart growth” concepts which include the Kentlands and Lakelands featuring walkable communities with residences and businesses in close proximity. These communities remain an attractive destination for both consumers and home buyers. The Washingtonian/Rio development also continues to attract large numbers of people to its commercial area.

### **Germantown**

The evolution of Germantown from a village crossroads in the 1840’s to its designation in the 1974 *Germantown Master Plan* as a corridor city in the *General Plan* for Montgomery County has been astounding. This 11,000 acre three-by-five mile area bounded by Great and Little Seneca Creeks and bisected by I-270 was to be developed into a “new community” similar to Columbia and Reston. However, because of fragmented land ownership, Germantown could not be developed by a single developer. To offset this problem, the County government assumed the role of coordinator, working with multiple landowners to create a cohesive “new town.” This approach was a first in the United States with local government attempting to guide and stage development through its planning, zoning, subdivision, and capital programming processes.



The 1989 revision of the master plan recommended some changes that would make the town center the principal activity center for Germantown and would establish a residential character in selected areas with single-family detached homes to provide a broader mix of housing types so that Germantown could evolve into a full life-cycle community. The projected proportion of single-family detached homes was increased from 18% to 29% as the proportion of single-family attached and multi-unit dwellings was decreased from 58% to 31%.

Efforts of county staff, the local chamber of commerce, and developers are defining the town center even more as recommended in a recent report by the Urban Land Institute. One initiative underway is to identify and define a new Business District for the town that will increase the number of jobs in the community. The Department of Economic Development has staff assigned to concentrate efforts in attracting large employers to Germantown. The immediate success of the Germantown Transit Center will support commuting needs of that new workforce.

Germantown residents are now seeing the fruition of the town center as it continues to develop with office and retail establishments, restaurants, the activities of the new library, a hotel, and plans for an urban park. New signage now announces upcoming performances at the BlackRock Center for the Arts which is located in the heart of the town center. In reaction to



this development, older commercial areas have initiated renovations to attract major retailers and to extend the feel of the town center's architecture. This has not come too soon for the 80,000 plus residents who are enjoying the ambiance that Germantown offers to all ages and ethnicities. The 1989 master plan was updated in the fall of 2009 with the approval of the County Council to focus on the development of Germantown's employment sector as a major priority.

### **Goshen**

Goshen, an unincorporated community of about 15,000 residents with a minimum of two-acre zoning, has a picturesque landscape of rolling hills separated by streams and creeks providing abundant water through-out the land. It had its beginnings in 1743 when a land grant consisting of Benjamin's Square and Land of Goshen was deeded to Benjamin Woolingford. By 1790 there were two mills built by the Pigman family, a copper mine and log cabin used as the mill store on property known as Pigman's Purchase. Later that log cabin became part of the Goshen store and post office. Prosperous farmers grew tobacco, corn and wheat on this fertile land and remained for many generations. As a result, there are many historical homes in Goshen including Woodbourne Plantation, Fertile Meadows, Avalon and Black and White Inn which was the only establishment where African American travelers could stay during the era of segregation. Prathertown, also located in Goshen, is one of the oldest African American communities in the county. It was founded in 1883 by emancipated slaves. The Goshen Civic Association and Goshen Historical Preservation Society are dedicated to preserving Goshen's quality of life, looking to the future while preserving its rich history for generations to come.

### **Laytonsville**

Laytonsville, originally known as Cracklintown for its renowned crackling bread, was founded in 1782 by John Layton. The original town extended beyond its current municipal limits along Sundown Road toward the Hawlings River. Route 108 was built in the early 1800's to transport cattle and pigs to the markets in Baltimore making the town a popular spot for the overnight stay of drovers. Substantial brick buildings, including the Layton House, were constructed during this time. Another factor in the development of the town is its fertile soil that has drawn farmers for over two centuries. The town does not have public water, but as a result of issues with water quality and the plans for the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission to construct water lines to nearby developing areas, town residents have the opportunity to hook-up to public water. The town is governed by a mayor and town council who meet with residents on the first Tuesday of each month. Today, it is home to over 300 residents who are proud of their beautiful, historically preserved town.

### **Montgomery Village**

Montgomery Village is home to more than 40,000 residents. It is one of the first planned communities in the area and has come to reflect the diversity of Metropolitan Washington. The Village is located northeast of the Gaithersburg incorporated city limits and is managed by the Montgomery Village Foundation, Inc., headed by its executive vice president, and a board of directors who work with the County and State on a variety of issues and concerns. The Foundation publishes a bi-weekly newspaper and provides residents with recreation programs, maintenance of common areas, architectural standards, and other amenities.

The Foundation and individual neighborhoods continue to work with the County in designing the Webb Tract for the relocation of facilities from the County Service Park. Other topics of concern for the community are the continuation of Mid-county Highway and the options that will be presented when the Village's town sector zoning period expires.

### **North Potomac**

The North Potomac community, which can be found southwest of Route 28 and northwest of Shady Grove Road, must balance the desire to maintain the advantages of small, older communities with the need to incorporate new development. Although no new roads are immediately planned for the area, this community is not a part of the Agricultural Reserve and is experiencing new public and private development. New homes, senior housing, and commercial buildings have recently been built in the Travilah area of North Potomac establishing the new town center of Traville. The Planning Board staff held several community-wide meetings to present the proposals of the new Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan and to obtain community input and comment. The Plan, approved by the County Council, has received a considerable amount of testimony from residents and businesses. The plan addresses the development of the Belward Farm property by Johns Hopkins University as part of the County's plan for a world class life sciences center. Other master plan recommendations included the relocation of the Public Safety Training Academy to allow for dense residential development to provide housing for employees of the various life sciences employers, and the realignment of the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT). The density of the proposed development elicited great concern from the North Potomac community in general, especially those communities closest to the Belward and Life Sciences Center properties. Continued dialogue with community interest groups was essential in developing the final draft of the master plan. The UCAB facilitated several meetings with representatives from neighborhoods directly affected to encourage an open and healthy debate. The Master Plan's size was reduced and County officials will revisit the plan in six years.

### **Poolesville**

The incorporated town of Poolesville, named after its first resident, John Poole II, is largely independent with its own elected commissioners; the local government works in tandem with Montgomery County. The largest of the "small towns" in western Upcounty, Poolesville retains much of its rural charm while addressing issues of growth, crime and transportation. The community remains close-knit, and most residents consider Poolesville to be the County's most desirable place to live. In that spirit, the entire town comes out each September to celebrate the community's culture and history at Poolesville Days. Staff from the Upcounty Regional Services Center and the Department of Recreation are assisting town officials with their efforts to build a recreation center in the town.

### **Shady Grove**

A development plan for the Shady Grove Sector, which is the area surrounding the Shady Grove Metro station, was approved by the County Council in late 2006 and it incorporates smart growth principles. This area currently houses many of the County's industrial centers, such as bus depots, a liquor warehouse and the MCPS Food and Nutrition Services Center. The sector plan vision will transform the area into a mixed-use, transit-oriented community with amenities that will support and protect nearby residential neighborhoods. An

executive team has identified and negotiated the purchase of properties for the relocation of the service park facilities currently within the sector's boundaries. This group, which includes the Upcounty Regional Services Center staff, has also worked closely with the communities which are located near the proposed relocation sites. Details and updates about the A Smart Growth Initiative can be found at

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/puitmpl.asp?url=/Content/EXEC/cpus/index.asp>.

County Executive Leggett has also established the Smart Growth Initiative Implementation Advisory Group which includes county staff, business, educational, and technical advisors, as well as representatives of civic organizations, to provide advice on the development of this plan. In addition, the Shady Grove Sector Plan Advisory Committee, a group of residents who meet monthly with county planners, continues to monitor the implementation of the sector plan recommendations assuring that they are followed and that any problems are promptly brought to the attention of the Planning Board or County Council.

### **Washington Grove**

More than a century ago, members of the Methodist congregations in Washington, D.C., searching for a cool, quiet spot for retreats, set up their tents in the wooded oasis that is now Washington Grove. This oak-shaded town, which retains its historic charm and summer-camp feel, is still a refuge from city life. Roy McCathran, the town's first mayor, referred poetically to Washington Grove as "...a town within a forest, an oasis of tranquility and a rustic jewel in the diadem of the great free state of Maryland." Amazingly, this is as true today as it was in 1937 when he spoke these words. The dramatic effect has been heightened by the intense urban development now surrounding Washington Grove. Only about a dozen paved roads pass through the cluster of 216 homes, most fronted by gravel and grass walkways originally designed to protect passersby from being trampled by horses. About 60% of the town's 200-plus acres is green space. There are two forest preserves, several parks, and a small lake where residents swim in the summer and skate in winter.

The Town of Washington Grove continues to be a vibrant community governed by its mayor and town council. The town's website contains updated information on the town officials, committees, facilities, town charter, ordinances and master plan as well as its continuing interest in the development of the Shady Grove area including the county service park relocation and the development of the Intercounty Connector for which construction began in the autumn of 2008.

# *Upcounty Regional Services Center*

## *Accomplishments*

*2009- 2010*

## **Upcounty Regional Services Center's Accomplishments**

### **URSC Accomplishments in 2009 - 2010**

Successful renovation of the first floor and the introduction of new services to the community:

- MontgomeryWorks – a workforce development program of the Department of Economic Development
- Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity – a welcome center for new county residents
- Housing Counseling / Foreclosure Prevention – a partnership program of the Department of Housing and Community Affairs
- Office of Human Resources Training – a variety of training opportunities for County Government employees

Successful restructuring of the URSC organization.

Successful development and implementation of two savings plans during the year.

Completed the site evaluation process for the North County Maintenance Depot project

Successful facilitation and negotiation with the Department of Transportation, the Montgomery Village Foundation, and a local developer on a location for an upgraded transit center in Montgomery Village

Partnered with Roberto Clemente Elementary School, the Collaboration Council, and Department of Recreation to develop a summer youth program for middle school youths

Successful negotiation to have surveillance cameras installed at the Germantown Transit Center in town center.